

CHAPTER 2

BATTLE COMMAND

Battle command is the process of assimilating thousands of bits of information to visualize the battlefield, assess the situation, and direct military action required to achieve victory. Thinking and acting are simultaneous activities for leaders in battle.

The command and control of combat elements on the modern battlefield are the biggest challenges faced by combat leaders. Command involves directing elements; control ensures the directions are carried out. The greatest tactician in the world would be ineffective if he did not properly use the methods available to direct and control his combat elements. Command and control must be kept extremely simple to be effective.

The scout platoon leader leads his platoon and is assisted by the PSG. He uses a variety of techniques to plan operations, issue orders, employ the platoon, and communicate. At platoon level, effective command and control depend mainly on leadership, training, a sound and thoroughly understood SOP, and the effective use of control measures and communications equipment and techniques.

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The primary function of the scout platoon is to gather information. The scout platoon is not designed to fight or to act as tank killers. It is designed to perform reconnaissance and limited security missions, using proper techniques of movement (both mounted and dismounted) and stealth.

Section I. COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

BATTALION SCOUT PLATOON

The scout platoon in an armor or mechanized infantry battalion performs several critical tasks in support of the battalion commander's concept of the operation. The success or failure of the scout platoon often results in the success or failure of the main force. As the eyes and ears of the battalion, the scout platoon leader must stay in communication with the battalion tactical operations center (TOC). This is necessary to keep the platoon informed of the battalion and brigade situation as well as the current enemy situation and to ensure information gained by the platoon is transmitted to the battalion in a timely manner.

The battalion commander must personally provide the scout platoon leader with his intent. He must explain what is expected of the reconnaissance or security effort in each phase of the operation and give the priority intelligence requirements (PIR).

The battalion executive officer (XO) or S4 must monitor the maintenance and logistical status of the scout platoon. To help sustain the platoon's operating ability, they should ensure the scouts receive top priority for repair and resupply. They should specifically address medical evacuation and vehicle recovery. They must ensure that the battalion has a detailed and workable plan to support the platoon with Classes I, III, and V requirements during the conduct of its mission.

The scout platoon leader needs to understand how he and his platoon fit into the intelligence collection process. The S2 is a key player in the development of the battalion reconnaissance and surveillance (R&S) plan and the intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) process.

The R&S plan is produced to organize the collection of information the commander needs to fight and win the battle. A maneuver brigade and its assigned battalions will all produce R&S plans. The brigade plan will task

the subordinate battalions, and these tasks will be incorporated into the battalion plan. Figure 2-1 shows how the R&S plan fits into the information gathering process.

NOTE: The R&S plan is developed very early in the planning process because it is critical to get the scout platoon and other R&S assets, such as ground surveillance radar (GSR) and engineers, into their missions as early as possible.

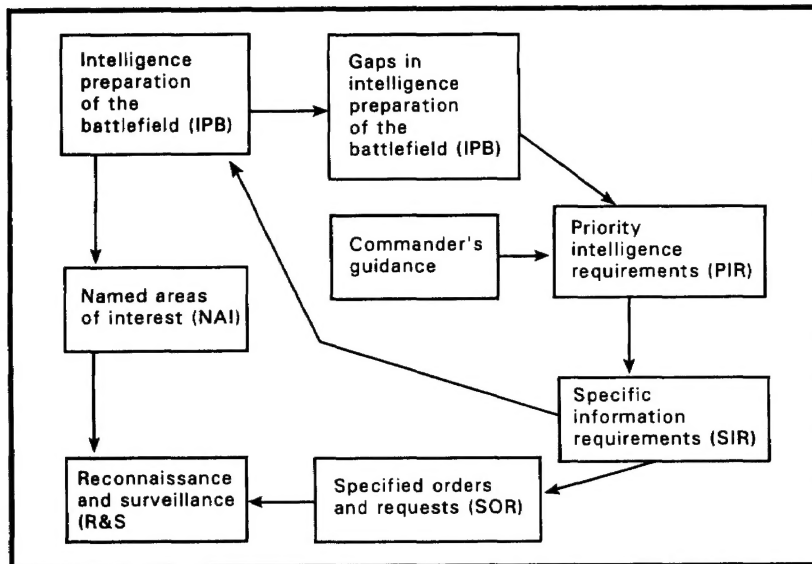


Figure 2-1. The information-gathering process.

IPB is the commander and staff's analysis of the enemy, weather, and terrain to determine and evaluate the enemy's capabilities, vulnerabilities, and probable courses of action in the defense and unit locations and strengths in the offense. **The scout platoon's mission is to confirm or deny the commander's IPB and provide information on the commander's PIR as assigned in the R&S plan** (see Figure 2-1).

In the defense, the S2 first conducts a terrain analysis to determine enemy routes, mobility corridors, and avenues of approach. In the offense, he determines how and where the enemy will fight, how enemy AT systems and obstacles are arrayed, and what counterattack routes the enemy is likely to take.

In both cases, he conducts his analysis by applying enemy doctrinal templates to specific terrain. This becomes a situational template (see [Figure 2-2](#)). With the situational template, he can develop an event template (see [Figure 2-3](#)). This template identifies projected significant events and enemy activities on the battlefield. A thorough analysis of the event template allows the S2 to visualize the enemy moving along a route or mobility corridor or to determine how the enemy will fight if he is defending. Critical areas where significant events can occur then become apparent. These are called named areas of interest (NAI). An NAI in the defense is a point or area along a mobility corridor where enemy activity or lack of activity will confirm or deny a particular enemy course of action. In the offense, an NAI depicts a likely unit location and/or counter-attack route.

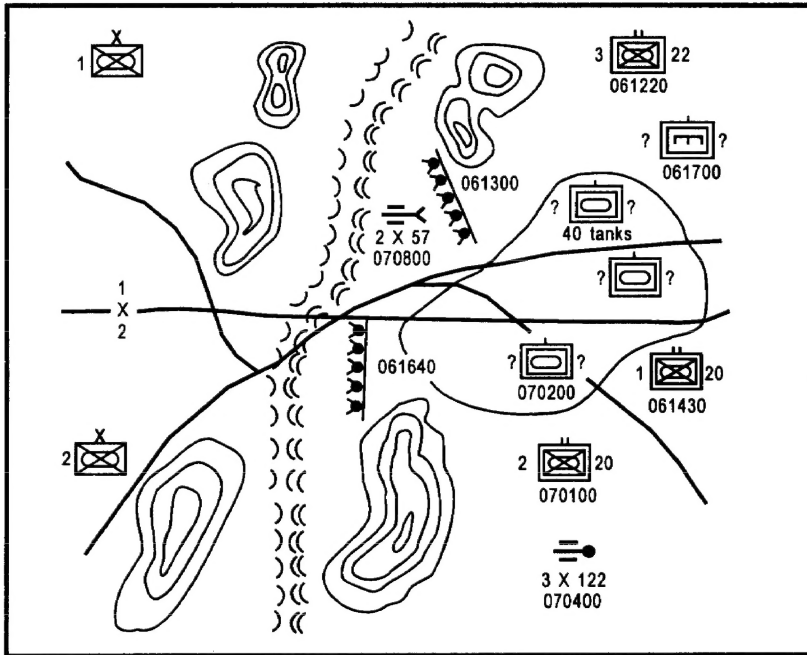


Figure 2-2. Situational template.

In addition, the event template serves as the basis for the decision support template (see [Figure 2-4](#) page 2-6). This relates the details of event templates to decision points for the commander. A decision point is a time or a location on the ground at which enemy activity may require a tactical decision. The

decision support template also identifies areas along each avenue of approach or an area of interest where the commander can influence the action through fire or maneuver. These areas are called target areas of interest (TAI). The commander can use TAIs to force the enemy either to abandon a particular course of action or to use additional resources to continue movement. The commander must be prepared to initiate action at decision points and TAIs in time to achieve the desired effects, which may be the concentration of fires and/or maneuver of forces.

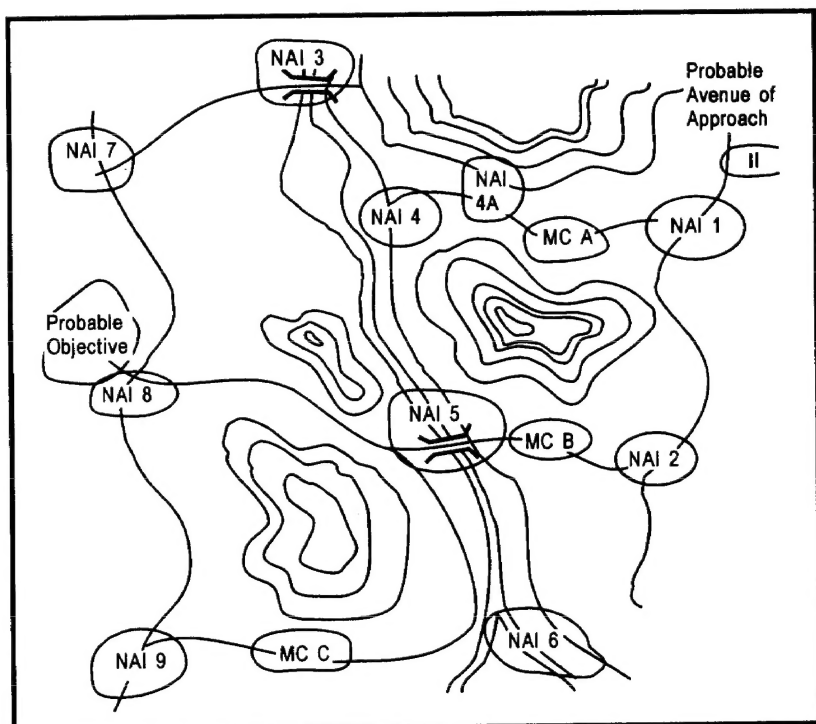


Figure 2-3. Event template.

From the decision support template, the S2, in coordination with the S3, prepares detailed R&S plan, which graphically depicts where and when reconnaissance elements should look for the enemy. The R&S plan must direct specific tasks and priorities to all R&S elements: company teams, scout platoons, GSR, and patrols. The battalion S3 translates the R&S plan into operational terms and graphics. For example, during reconnaissance operations, the S3

designates NAIs in terms of reconnaissance objectives for the scout platoon. The scout platoon leader designates checkpoints as control measures to guide his platoon's movement to these objectives.

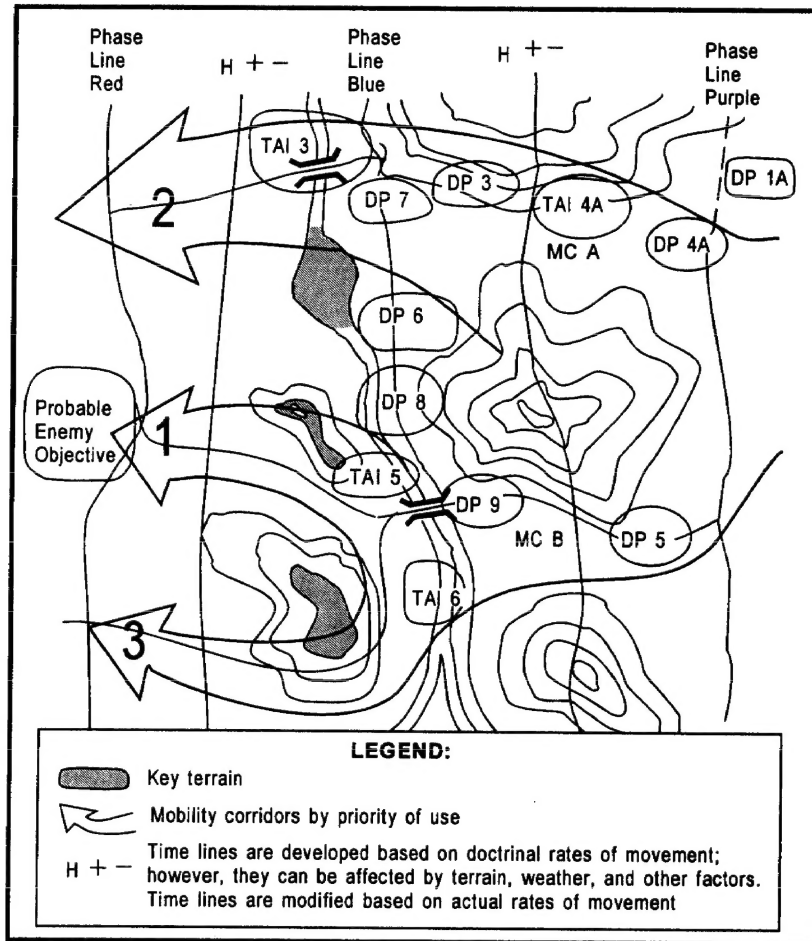


Figure 2-4. Decision support template.

Once in the vicinity of these objectives, the scouts confirm or deny the templated information. Additionally, if they find the enemy, the scouts look for possible weaknesses, gaps, and flanks of the enemy position. During screening operations, the S3 directs the scout platoon leader to report enemy

activity at designated NAIs. The scout platoon leader uses OPs to observe and report on these areas of command interest. The scouts must rapidly and accurately report all critical information they find during either reconnaissance or screening operations

The battalion S3 should brief the scout platoon leader on the disposition of friendly forces and the scheme of maneuver for the task force battle. The S3 provides the platoon leader with the current (and projected) R&S and operational graphics and terrain index reference system (TIRS) points to support additional graphics and fragmentary orders (FRAGO). If the commander does not brief the scout platoon leader, the S3 must ensure the commander's intent is accurately portrayed as he briefs the platoon leader. The S3 should plan for employment of the scout platoon throughout the entire course of the mission. He should provide guidance on when to report, what actions to take on enemy contact, and what CS is available. The S3 also reinforces the S2's guidance. The scout platoon leader should receive the S3's briefing before he departs the battalion area for his mission. He may also receive it as a FRAGO over the radio or from a messenger sent by the commander.

To ensure it can provide responsive fire support to the scout platoon, the fire support element (FSE) stays abreast of what the platoon is doing throughout the conduct of the mission. The scout platoon leader should coordinate with the fire support officer (FSO) to discuss his mission and the unique requirements the scout platoon has for fire support. The platoon leader finds out what support is available, where supporting units are located, and what fire support restrictions exist. He will then recommend preplanned targets and target priorities to be incorporated by the FSO into a scout platoon fire support plan. The platoon leader should depart the FSE with an approved target list and/or overlay.

The scout platoon leader may need to do additional coordination with the battalion signal officer if his mission will require communications support. He must request retrans or relay support from the battalion signal platoon if the mission dictates. Scouts should not perform relay duties as their primary platoon mission.

The scout platoon leader also coordinates available support with any attached or assigned elements such as engineers, air defense artillery (ADA), combat observation lasing team (COLT), GSR, and aeroscouts. This support is normally coordinated by the S3, but the platoon leader should be aware of how changes to the organization affect on his platoon. Ideally, this linkup should

occur at the TOC during daylight in sufficient time to conduct a thorough briefing and rehearsal with attached elements.

When the scout platoon leader leaves the TOC area to prepare for his mission he should, as a minimum, have the following materials:

- Operational graphics.
- R&S graphics.
- The situational template, event template, and notes on the current enemy situation.
- Fire support overlay.

CAVALRY TROOP SCOUT PLATOON

The command relationship of the scout platoon in a cavalry troop is similar to that of other platoons in a company-size organization. The scout platoon responds to its platoon leader, who receives guidance from the troop commander rather than from a battalion staff.

The primary difference in cavalry troop operations is the role of the troop XO. Unlike the “fighting XO” in the tank company, the troop XO is a battlefield manager for the troop commander. He operates from an M577 command post; this vehicle gives him the communications capability and facilities to receive, collate, and pass to higher headquarters the routine reconnaissance information processed by the troop’s scout platoons. In this system, most of the routine reports are sent to the troop XO rather than to the troop commander. The troop commander’s role is to monitor the routine actions, receive high-priority information to transmit on command nets, and fight the troop once contact is gained.

Section II. TROOP-LEADING PROCEDURES

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Decision-making is a conscious process for selecting a course of action from two or more alternatives. At platoon level, many decisions are based on SOPs and standard unit drills; these include evacuation of wounded soldiers, rearming and resupply procedures, and individual crew responsibilities. This allows the

platoon to operate quickly and efficiently without constant guidance from the platoon leader. SOPs are especially critical in helping to maintain combat preparedness when leaders are tired as a result of the stress of continuous operations. Because SOPs are so critical, it is absolutely necessary that everyone in the platoon know and understand them. FKSM 17-98-3 contains a sample platoon-level SOP applicable for both the battalion scout platoon and the cavalry troop scout platoon. [Appendix D](#) of this manual contains an outline for a platoon SOP.

Most tactical decisions are made by the commander. The platoon leader uses troop-leading procedures to put the operation into instructions his platoon members can understand. He then leads his platoon in the execution of the mission.

STEP-BY-STEP TROOP-LEADING PROCEDURES

These procedures are the platoon leader's most frequently used tool in mission preparation. **When employing them, the platoon leader should strive to use only one-third of the time available and give the other two-thirds to his platoon to prepare.** This is particularly important in the scout platoon. Scout teams will be operating independently, and the team leaders will require time to conduct their own troop-leading procedures and to issue orders and guidance to their teams. The eight steps in troop-leading procedures are—

- Receive and analyze the mission.
- Issue a warning order.
- Make a tentative plan.
- Initiate movement.
- Conduct reconnaissance.
- Complete the plan.
- Issue the order.
- Supervise and refine.

Receive and Analyze the Mission

The platoon leader normally receives his orders as a verbal operation order (OPORD) or as a FRAGO (see [Appendix C](#) for a discussion of orders). Upon

receipt of the order, his first task is to extract his mission from the commander's overall plan. If he is unable to understand the commander's intent, he should ask the commander for further clarification.

The platoon leader should then examine his platoon's specific tasks-what the commander told him to do in the order. In an OPORD, these tasks are contained in paragraph 3, which comprises the commander's intent, concept of the operation, specific instructions for the platoon, and coordinating instructions for the entire unit. The platoon leader should then identify his platoon's implied tasks, those that were not in the OPORD but that still must be done to complete the mission. These do not include tasks that are contained in the unit SOP. If the time is available, the platoon leader should confirm the implied tasks with his commander. **Finally, once all tasks are identified, the platoon leader should conduct reverse planning to ensure that all tasks can be accomplished in the time available and to make most efficient use of the time available.** The platoon leader then needs to restate his mission, answering the questions of who, what, when, where, and why.

Issue a Warning Order

After the platoon leader has analyzed his orders and worked out his mission and related tasks, he must quickly pass this information to his subordinate leaders. This is accomplished through the warning order. As a minimum, the following information must be included:

- To whom the warning order applies.
- The time and nature of the operation.
- The earliest time of movement.
- The time and place the OPORD will be issued.

If possible, the platoon leader should issue an overlay of the area of operations. In the absence of further orders, this gives the platoon an idea of the scope of the operation. Also, the platoon leader should inform his subordinates of the results of his reverse planning process and delegate appropriate preparatory tasks to the PSG and team leaders. If possible, the platoon leader should also include the task organization of the platoon. The reverse planning schedule, in addition to accounting for all required preparatory tasks, should include asleep plan. All elements should acknowledge receipt of the warning order.

Make a Tentative Plan

Once the warning order is issued, the platoon leader must determine how he will accomplish his mission. He puts the tasks he identified when he first received his order into battle sequence—the order in which he expects to meet each task. Working with the factors of METT-T, he makes a tentative plan for ultimate mission accomplishment. The following outline of METT-T factors should guide the platoon leader in his planning:

- Mission (most of this work has already been done).
 - What tasks did the commander say must be accomplished (specified tasks)?
 - What other tasks must be accomplished to conduct the mission (implied tasks)?
 - What is the commander's intent?
 - Based on the commander's intent, which of my tasks are absolutely essential?
- Enemy.
 - What type of unit are we up against?
 - Where is he?
 - What is he doing?
 - How strong is he?
 - What kind of equipment does he have?
 - What are his capabilities?
 - Where is he vulnerable?
 - Where are his kill zones and fire sacks?
 - What are his intentions?
 - What can he do in response to friendly actions?

- Terrain (and weather).
 - Where can I effectively observe and engage the enemy?
 - Where are the best covered and concealed routes?
 - Where are the natural obstacles and how can they affect maneuver?
 - Where are the likely areas for enemy-emplaced obstacles and how can they affect maneuver?
 - Are there bypasses or must obstacles be breached?
 - Where is the key terrain?
 - How can key terrain be used in support of the mission?
 - Where are the best avenues of approach for the enemy and for friendly forces?
 - How has the recent weather affected the area of operations?
 - Will the weather become better or worse during the mission?
 - How will fog, rain, dust, heat, snow, wind, or sand affect my men and equipment during the mission?
- Troops.
 - What is the present condition of the vehicles, equipment, and men?
 - What is the supply status of ammunition, fuel, and other necessary items?
 - What is the state of training of the platoon?
 - What is the state of morale?
 - How much sleep have the men had?
 - How much sleep can the men get before and during the operation?

- Does the platoon need any additional equipment to support or accomplish its mission?
- What attachments does the platoon have to accomplish its mission?
- Time available.
 - How much time is available to plan and conduct reconnaissance?
 - How much time is available for rearming, refueling, and resupply?
 - How long will it take the platoon to move to the line of departure (LD), the objective, or the OPs?
 - How will rehearsals be conducted?

This analysis of METT-T is by no means an all-inclusive list, but it should help the platoon leader in his planning process. Although the platoon leader does not perform an IPB, he may have received an IPB product (decision support template) along with his order. He should incorporate this information into his METT-T analysis and use it in developing one or more courses of action. He must choose the best course of action based on the advantages and disadvantages of each course.

Initiate Movement

After issuing a warning order and making a tentative plan, the platoon leader may choose to initiate movement. He may send a quartering party out to a new assembly area, or he may move his whole platoon to set up guides for the battalion movement. Whatever the case, the platoon leader should at least be able to determine when the platoon will move. He announces this in terms of a readiness condition (see FKSM 17-98-3).

Conduct Reconnaissance

This step of the troop-leading procedures allows the platoon leader to confirm the validity of his tentative plan. He should at least confirm his initial march route to the LD or start point (SP) and check initial positions. If possible, he should also check some of the area beyond the LD, taking his section leaders

with him so they too can see the ground. This may require permission of the commander. If the platoon leader cannot go personally, he should task his subordinates to accomplish specific reconnaissance requirements to most efficiently use the available time. An example of this is tasking a squad leader to reconnoiter and time routes to the SP. The platoon leader must conduct the reconnaissance with an open mind; not everything he sees will match his tentative plan. He must be flexible enough to change and competent enough to work out new plans swiftly. The platoon leader must ensure that all reconnaissance is authorized by his higher headquarters.

Complete the Plan

The platoon leader should be able to bring the tentative plan close to completion after his reconnaissance. He should continue to refine the plan based on new information from his parent unit commander, other platoon leaders, or his own troops.

Issue the Order

The platoon order should be issued to the squad leaders and team leaders. Once everyone has arrived at the place and time indicated in the warning order, the platoon leader should set up his vehicle commanders in the order in which they will maneuver in sector. To ensure everyone has the graphic control measures he will refer to, he should issue the revised operations overlay before he starts. He should have a copy of the graphics for each of his vehicle commanders. The PSG ensures all overlays match the platoon leader's overlay. To use his time most efficiently, the platoon leader should use a walk-through rehearsal as part of his briefing of paragraph 3 of the order.

If the order can be issued from a vantage point, the platoon leader can physically indicate the ground his scouts will maneuver across. If a vantage point is not available, a terrain cloth, sand table, or map may be used. The platoon leader should have a briefing kit available to build a model for his briefing. The kit might include the following items:

- Chalk.
- Colored sand.
- 3-by-5-inch index cards.

- “Micro” armor vehicles or other models.
- Yarn or string.
- Pens and markers.
- Stakes.
- Engineer tape.
- Operational symbol cutouts.

The platoon leader issues his finalized order in the five-paragraph OPORD format. He refers to notes while giving his orders to make sure he does not forget anything. He ensures that vehicle commanders and team leaders understand the entire plan as well as their particular portion of it. When time permits, the platoon leader should war-game the operation with his leaders. To ensure complete understanding of the operation, he should end the order with a brief-back of key points by his leaders.

Supervise and Refine

The platoon leader and PSG make sure all crew members have been briefed by their vehicle commanders and/or team leaders and understand the mission and concept of the operation. Team briefings and rehearsals are essential to a successful operation. **The platoon leader makes sure the entire platoon chain of command conducts precombat checks and procedures in accordance with FKSM 17-98-3 or his own SOP.** These steps include the following:

- Perform before-operation maintenance checks and report or repair deficiencies.
- Perform prepare-to-fire checks for all weapons and report or repair deficiencies. Make sure weapons are boresighted and all sights are referred. Machine guns should be test-fired, if possible.
- Upload vehicles in accordance with SOP.
- Conduct resupply of rations, water, fuel, oil, all weapons, ammunition, pyrotechnics, first-aid kits, and equipment batteries (for such items as flashlights, night-vision devices, mine detectors, and NBC alarms).

- Make radio checks, when possible.
- Camouflage vehicles to match the area of operations.
- Make sure crew members are in the correct uniform and mission-oriented protective posture (MOPP) level.
- Conduct rehearsals to reinforce training and proficiency in mission-critical tasks.

The platoon leader and PSG should observe each crew during precombat checks. They should conduct an inspection once the team leaders report that their vehicles and crews are prepared.

Flexibility is the key to effective operations. The platoon leader must be able to refine his plan as new information becomes available. If he adjusts his plan, he must inform the platoon. Once the operation has begun, the platoon leader must be able to adapt quickly to new situations and new orders.

When there is not enough time to conduct all eight troop-leading steps in detail, the platoon leader must understand how to trim them to save time. Most troop-leading procedures can be done mentally. Once the order is received, the platoon leader conducts a quick map reconnaissance and analysis, then sends for the vehicle commanders. He makes sure they post the minimum required control measures on their maps and gives an abbreviated order consisting of a quick enemy and friendly situation, the mission of the platoon, and the concept of the operation. The service support and command and signal paragraphs can be deleted if covered by the SOP. The abbreviated order should not be the usual technique used by the platoon; it is a technique to use only when time is short.

In some cases, there may not be enough time even for these shortened procedures. The platoon may have to move out and receive FRAGOs by radio or at the next scheduled halt. Effective SOPs and training enable platoons to move and accomplish their mission with a minimum of formal orders.

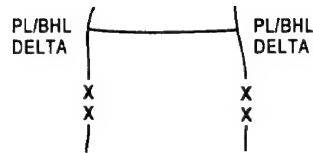
When time is available, however, there is no substitute for effective preparatory instructions, a thorough tactical plan, and a formal OPORD. The odds of success increase considerably when detailed planning and rehearsal are used prior to an operation, even when time is short. Successful platoon leaders make the most of every available minute.

Section III. GRAPHIC CONTROL MEASURES

Orders are a key element in the troop-leading process; they are critical to efficient command and control in the scout platoon. In turn, clarity is an essential element in proper understanding and execution of an order. Because orders in the scout platoon are generally issued orally, the graphics that accompany the order take on added significance. This section discusses common graphic control measures; they can provide clarity when an order is issued and assist in the command and control process once the scout platoon begins executing the order.

BATTLE HANDOVER LINE

The BHL depicts where responsibility for the conduct of combat operations is passed from one force to another. Scouts conduct hasty handover as well as deliberate handover as part of both reconnaissance and security operations. The BHL is also a phase line.



OBSERVATION POST

Very common in security missions, this graphic usually indicates the general area where the OP will be set. If these positions are not known or are adjusted after the mission begins, the graphic must be added or changed to reflect the actual location. Unless the leader has reconnoitered the location, the scouts manning the OP normally have the latitude to adjust the position to best observe the assigned objective.



CONTACT POINT

Contact points are places on the ground where friendly elements are required to meet. The element assigning the contact point must specify what is meant by "meet." The scout platoon is often required to execute contact points for its higher headquarters. In addition, it can use contact points to ensure control and unity of effort of scout teams as they execute their missions.



CHECKPOINT

Checkpoints are used to control and direct the maneuver of scout teams. They are placed on critical features of particular interest to the scout platoon. Generally, these are assigned to scout teams as part of the platoon order or in accordance with the unit SOP. Checkpoints may be used instead of boundaries by either the higher headquarters or the platoon to focus the operations of scouts. They can also be used in conjunction with boundaries.



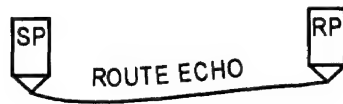
BOUNDARY

Boundary lines are key control measures in scout platoon operations. In the battalion scout platoon, the platoon leader must determine whether the battalion boundary line is also his boundary line. In battalion operations, the scouts may not be fixed by a specific boundary line, instead focusing more on reconnaissance objectives (designated by checkpoints). Cavalry scout platoons normally operate within platoon boundary lines. The scout platoon may also use boundary lines to designate areas of responsibility for scout teams.

General tactical boundary	Friendly present	
	Friendly planned	
	Enemy present	
	Enemy anticipated or suspected	

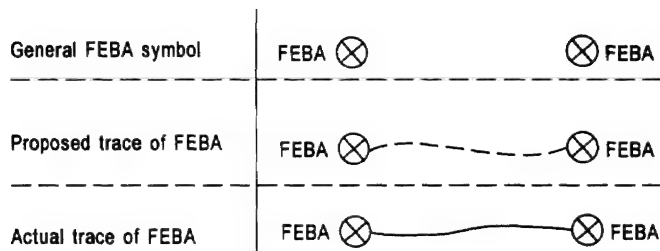
ROUTE

Routes of particular interest to the platoon or its higher headquarters should be indicated on the platoon's graphics. The route should be named, and key portions should have checkpoints. An SP and an RP (end point) should be designated.



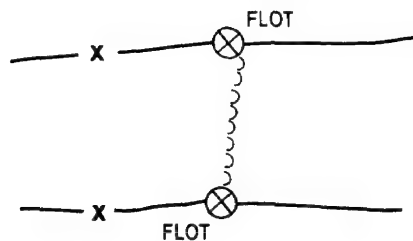
FORWARD EDGE OF THE BATTLE AREA

The FEBA is actually the forward edge of the main battle area. As such, the scout platoon will frequently be operating forward of this line or passing through this line to execute its missions.



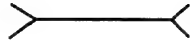
FORWARD LINE OF OWN TROOPS

The FLOT designates the most forward-deployed friendly forces. It may be forward of the FEBA, and it frequently indicates the most forward positions of the scouts or other assets, such as long range surveillance patrols.



PASSAGE LANE

This is the designated lane used by a passing unit to move through and beyond the stationary unit. Scouts can designate and mark lanes or provide guides through them.



PASSAGE POINT

This is the point on the ground at which an element is considered to have passed through another. Scouts frequently are called upon to coordinate the location of passage points and to man them.



RALLY POINT

This is an easily identifiable point where an element can reorganize or consolidate. Scouts use rally points during both mounted and dismounted operations. During mounted operations, the platoon would use a rally point to consolidate for operations such as a passage of lines or CSS.



Section IV. NAVIGATION AND POSITION REPORTING

TERRAIN INDEX REFERENCE SYSTEM

TIRS is a tool that can be used routinely to maneuver the platoon. It should be used during combat operations. It can be used to identify battle positions (BP), to quickly pass out control measures (such as the LD, PLs, and boundaries), or to report friendly unit locations. It is not a method of encrypting

information. Repeated use of TIRS “in the clear” can compromise unit security and safety.

The parent unit normally issues the TIRS points to be used for the operation with the initial overlay received during the warning order. If the overlay with TIRS does not come with the warning order, the platoon leader should actively seek out the TIRS list. (TIRS should be transferred to graphics or directly onto a map as soon as possible. The written list of TIRS points must be kept for future reference.)

Each TIRS point is designated by a mark, in the shape of a cross or plus sign, located on a grid line intersection. Each point is given a designator of one letter and two numbers; the designator is placed in the upper-right quadrant of the mark. TIRS point designators are a matter of SOP. Units may assign specific letters and numbers for specific unit sectors or areas of operations. For example, a TIRS point could be identified with the designator X56 and marked on a map at PA 130620 (using six-digit grid coordinates).

Referencing a location from a TIRS point is done in kilometers. For example, 500 meters is given as “POINT FIVE,” 1,000 meters as “ONE,” and 3,500 meters as “THREE POINT FIVE.” For shifts from the TIRS point, cardinal directions are used rather than “left,” “right,” “up,” or “down.” Shifts to the east or west are given first, followed by shifts to the north or south. Consider the following transmission: “FROM X-RAY FIVE SIX-EAST ONE POINT EIGHT—NORTH ONE POINT SEVEN.” This means, “From the tick mark for TIRS point X56, shift east 1,800 meters and north 1,700 meters.” When a TIRS point is placed on a grid intersection, the use of shifts makes the TIRS point as accurate as a six-digit grid. For an example of using a TIRS point to locate a target, refer to [Figure 2-5](#), page 2-22.

TIRS makes it easier for the platoon leader to identify his front line trace or OP positions. For instance, with the scout platoon setup in a screen line as depicted in [Figure 2-6](#), page 2-23, the platoon leader would report his section locations as:

“ALPHA-SET FROM BRAVO TWO ONE—WEST ONE POINT ONE—NORTH POINT THREE. CHARLIE-SET FROM BRAVO TWO ONE-SOUTH POINT ONE. BRAVO-SET FROM CHARLIE THREE SIX—EAST ONE—SOUTH ONE POINT ONE-OVER.”

The enemy will quickly figure out the TIRS locations if they are continually used in the clear on an unsecure net. Try not to use the same TIRS point more than twice. Instead, use a different TIRS point to reference the same location. The points can be encrypted using the numerical cipher/authentication system (authentication tables) and the operations code from the signal operation instructions (SOI). The letter in the TIRS point designator is given in the clear. The two-digit numerical portion is then encoded, making the designator for the TIRS point into a three-letter group. If the same TIRS point is used again, change the two-digit numerical designator. TIRS should never be used to give enemy locations.

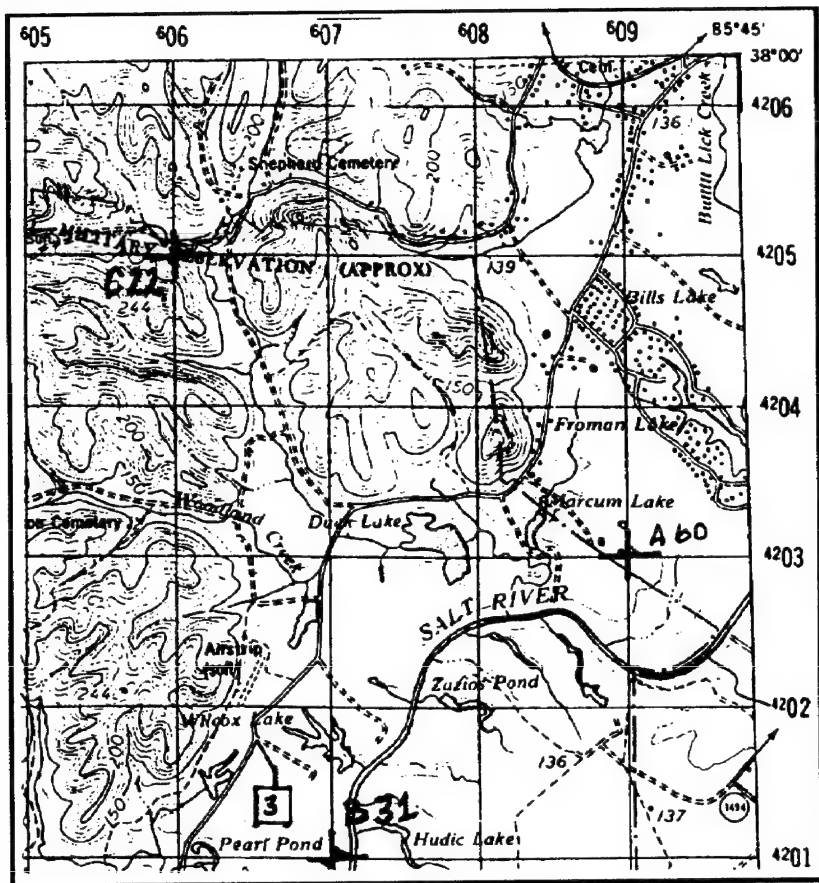


Figure 2-5. Placing a TIRS point on a map.

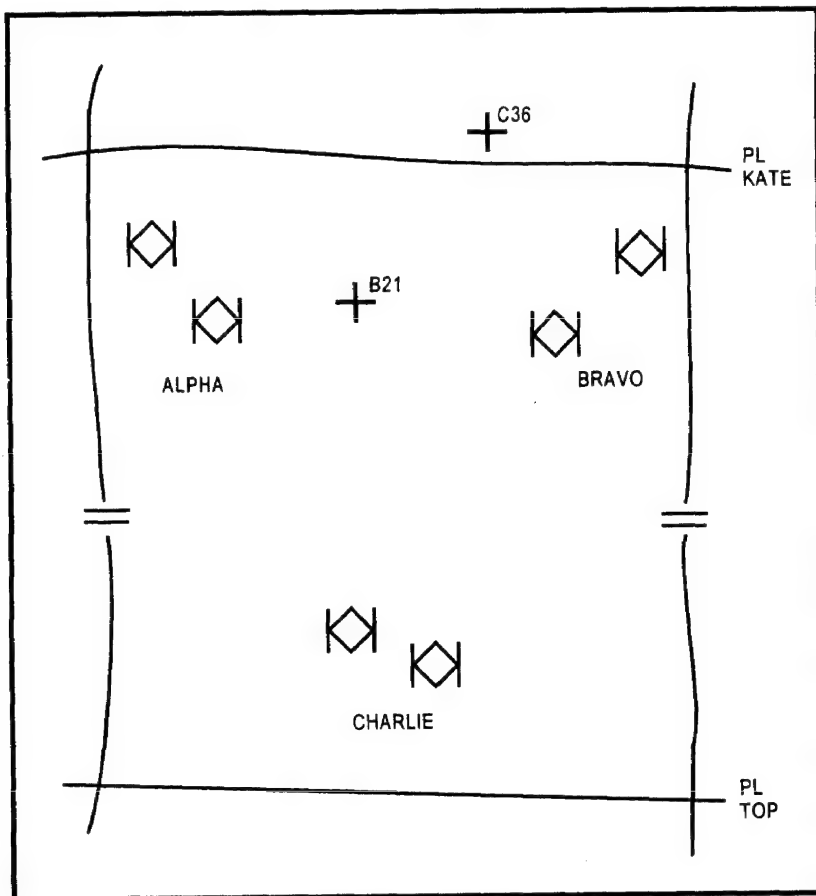


Figure 2-6. Screen line.

POSITION LOCATION DEVICES

If the platoon is equipped with a satellite global positioning system (GPS), the system becomes a key navigation tool. It does not, however, replace the map as the primary method of navigation.

The scout uses his map to plan movement based on his knowledge of the situation. As the scout executes his movement using the map, he uses GPS to check his location and prevent misorientation. The degree to which the scout

relies on GPS is dependent on terrain and the quality of the available maps. Generally, the greater the variations in terrain and in accuracy in his map, the less he will rely on GPS. In featureless terrain or when only poor quality maps are available, GPS maybe the primary navigation tool. In addition to navigation, GPS can assist the scout in reporting reconnaissance information accurately and in maintaining an accurate mental picture of the battlefield.

SECTION V. SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Situational awareness is the ability to maintain a constant, clear mental picture of the tactical situation. This picture includes an understanding of both the friendly and enemy situations and of relevant terrain. It also includes relating events in time to form logical conclusions and make decisions that anticipate events. Since the platoon normally operates dispersed as individual teams, it is essential that all scout leaders maintain situational awareness so that they can make sound, quick tactical decisions. Situational awareness also permits the scout leader to anticipate events and relate separate pieces of information to form logical conclusions. One of the critical outcomes of situational awareness on the part of all scouts is a reduction in fratricide incidents.

BATTLEFIELD FRAMEWORK

The commander will structure the battlefield based on the conditions of METT-T and his commander's intent. How he does this affects the scout platoon leader's mission planning and his ability to maintain situational awareness. The framework of the battlefield can vary from a very rigid extreme with obvious front and rear boundaries and closely tied adjacent units to a dispersed and decentralized structure with few secure areas and unit boundaries and no definable front or rear. Between these extremes is an unlimited number of possible variations. Maintaining situational awareness becomes more difficult as the battlefield becomes less structured. Modern, highly mobile operations with small forces lend themselves to a less rigid framework that challenges the scout's ability to maintain an accurate "picture" of the battlefield.

"PICTURING" THE BATTLEFIELD

To have a clear picture of the battlefield, the scout must have virtually perfect knowledge of the friendly situation one level higher than his own. This means the cavalry scout platoon leader must know the troop situation and the

battalion scout platoon leader must know the battalion situation. It is also important that the platoon leader update the scout team leaders periodically regarding the higher situation. The platoon leader must have a relatively complete knowledge of the terrain, and he must know as much as possible about the enemy. The requirement to maintain a real-time picture of the battlefield one level higher does not relieve the scout of the requirement to understand the situation and commander's intent two levels higher. The difference is that the scout's understanding of the situation two levels higher than his own does not have to be as specific or in real time.

Most of the information the scout platoon leader needs comes in the form of reports over his FM communication system. He receives many reports as a result of his platoon graphics. Good graphics require that the subordinate elements report periodically as they accomplish requirements. The platoon leader must be aware of when the scouts report so he will be aware of how current his visualization of the situation is. If an element does not report in a timely manner, the platoon leader must quickly determine the situation of the overdue element.

Although many reports are not addressed specifically to him, particularly on the higher net, the scout platoon leader must monitor them by eavesdropping on the nets as traffic is sent. How effectively he can accomplish this is, to some degree, experience-dependent; however, there are techniques he can apply to relate the information he is receiving to his map and thereby track the tactical situation.

The scout platoon leader's map is the key to maintaining situational awareness (see Figure 2-7, page 2-26). He should plot all friendly position reports up to one level higher than his own. Information from spot reports should also be plotted. The scout should use different colors for friendly and enemy elements to allow quick distinction. To avoid cluttering the map, he should place a dot or symbol on his map where the element is located and label the point with a number. The same number should then be written in the map margin (or beyond the area of operations) with the complete spot report or unit ID next to it. This notation should also include the time. As positions or reports are updated, the old symbol is crossed off and a new one with a corresponding notation is added; it is critical that updates to previous reports be clearly identified as such during transmission. This simple system allows all scouts to easily track and monitor the tactical situation. This system can be augmented by a formal platoon log, kept on the platoon leader's or platoon sergeant's vehicle or on both.

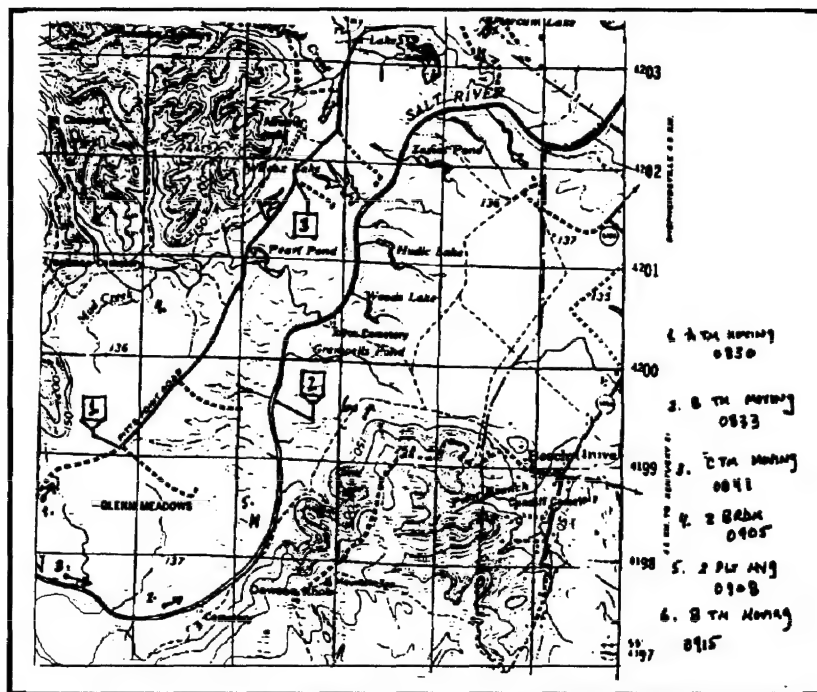


Figure 2-7. Sample situation map (cavalry scout platoon).

BATTLE SPACE

As discussed previously, an accurate picture of the battlefield provides the platoon leader with important tactical information, including friendly and enemy positions and relevant terrain. In turn, complete understanding of the military significance of this picture requires knowledge of the concept of battle space, the key element in the intellectual process of visualizing the battlefield.

At the most fundamental level, battle space is the three-dimensional “bubble” or area in which the platoon can acquire enemy forces and influence them with effective fires. This space is defined by numerous battlefield factors: the locations of friendly forces, including the platoon’s individual scout teams, OPs, and patrols; the effects of terrain, weather, and movement; and the ranges of all available platoon weapons and sensing systems. Each scout team has its own battle space; the platoon battle space is the sum of individual team battle spaces (see [Figure 2-8](#)). Platoon battle space is not restricted by boundaries; it can overlap with the battle space of adjacent units.

Battle space has applications in all phases of mission planning and execution. During the planning process, it is a critical factor in selection of routes and tentative positions. Once mission execution begins, the platoon leader's knowledge of his battle space is critical to issuing timely and effective orders as the situation changes.

The importance of battle space demands that the platoon leader direct most of his battle command effort toward managing, and enhancing, his space. He must be aware at every moment how battle space is changing as friendly and enemy forces move and as terrain and visibility conditions change (see Figure 2-9, page 2-28). He must evaluate how these changes affect his scout teams.

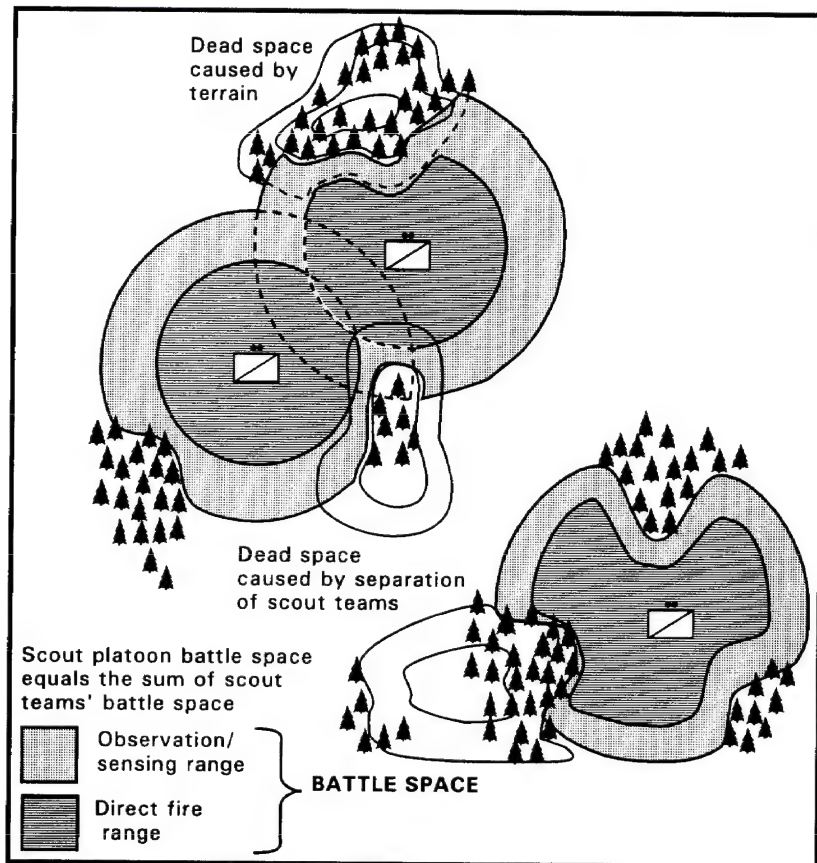


Figure 2-8. Scout platoon's battle space.

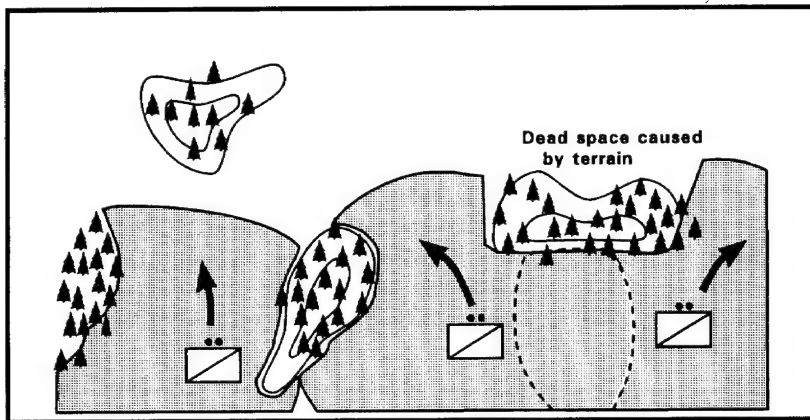


Figure 2-9A. Effects of movement on battle space.

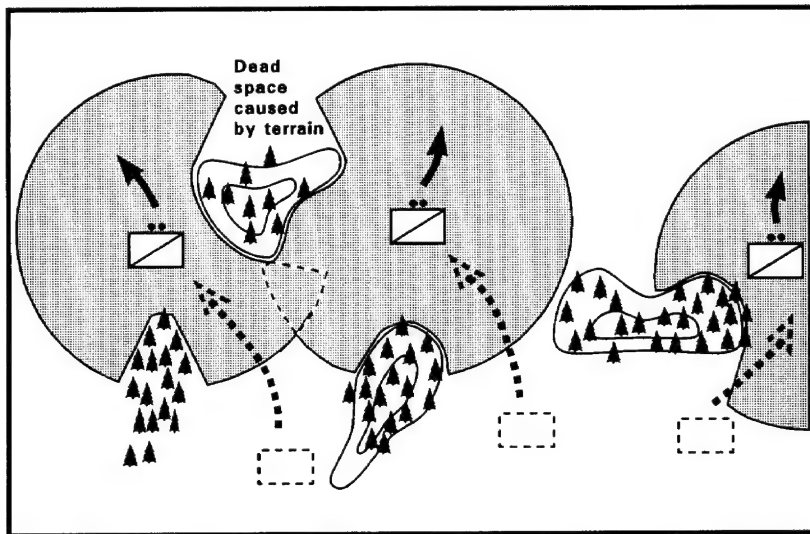


Figure 2-9B. Effects of movement on battle space (continued).

As the operation progresses, the platoon leader must take active measures to shape the battle space to his best advantage. One vital step in this process is to eliminate any gaps, or dead space, that exist within the “bubble.” The platoon leader can accomplish this in several ways, including maneuvering scout teams, repositioning OPs, and deploying patrols or remote sensors (see [Figure 2-10](#)).

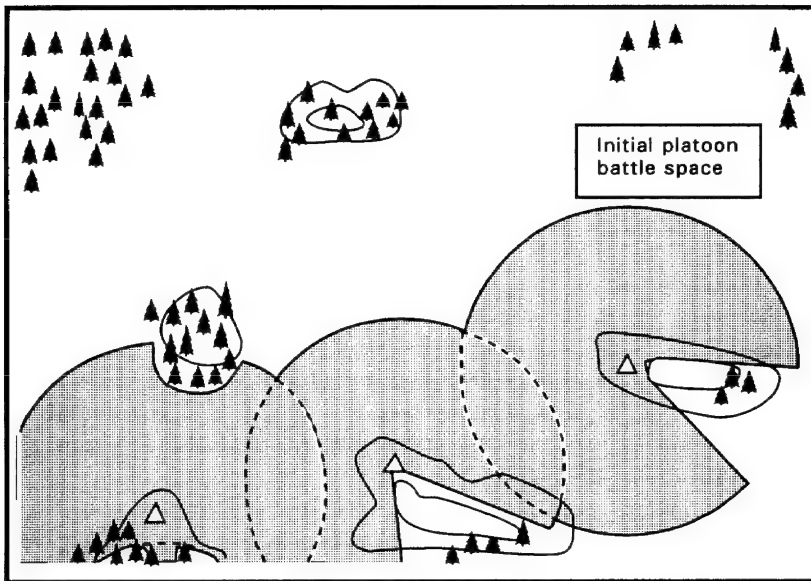


Figure 2-10A. Optimizing battle space.

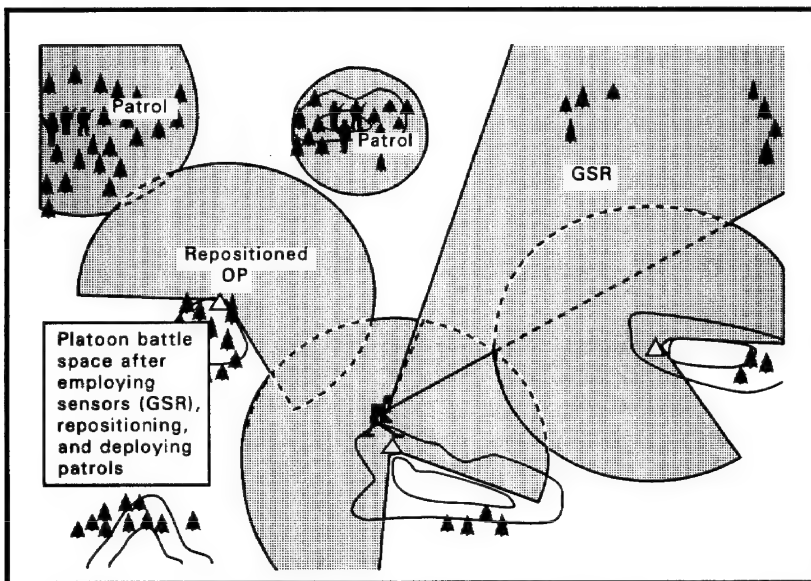


Figure 2-10B. Optimizing battle space (continued).

FRATRICIDE

Fratricide has been demonstrated to be a significant danger to all forces operating on a mobile battlefield where weapon system lethality is significantly greater than identification friend or foe (IFF) capability. Fratricide is the result of many factors including poor direct fire control plans, navigation errors, combat identification failures, and inadequate operational graphics.

More than any other maneuver element, scouts are at risk of being victims of fratricide. The scout platoon is particularly vulnerable because it often maneuvers in dispersed elements forward and to the flanks of other friendly combat forces. In a battalion, company teams often do not keep up with the plan or disposition of the scouts. For these reasons, situational awareness on the part of all scout leaders, particularly the platoon leader, is critical not only to mission success but also to survival.

In any tactical situation, it is critical that scouts know where other friendly elements are operating. With this knowledge, scouts must anticipate dangerous conditions and take steps to either avoid or mitigate them. The platoon leader must constantly be vigilant to changes and developments in the situation that may place his elements in danger. He must also ensure that all scout team positions are constantly reported to higher headquarters so that all other friendly elements are aware of where the scouts are and what they are doing. At troop and battalion level, no-fire zones can be designated to control friendly direct and indirect fire into areas in which scouts are or will be operating. When the platoon leader perceives a potential fratricide situation, he must personally use the higher net to coordinate directly with the friendly element involved.

Section VI. TACTICAL ORGANIZATION

The scout platoon leader task organizes his platoon to accomplish the mission based on the factors of METT-T. Unlike most other combat arms platoons, which maneuver together in formation, the scout platoon normally maneuvers as individual scout teams under the direction and control of the platoon leader. A scout team may consist of from one to five vehicles plus OPCON combat elements. Determining which organization best meets his mission requirements is one of the key decisions the platoon leader must make during his troop-leading procedures. Because of its higher vehicle density, the HMMWV scout platoon has several more organizational options than does its CFV counterpart.

CFV SCOUT PLATOON

The CFV scout platoon normally operates in one of three organizations (three-team, two-section, or six-vehicle) regardless of the formation, movement technique, or mission. The CFV scout platoon, with only six reconnaissance platforms, rarely has the luxury of operating a separate headquarters element.

Three-Team

The three-team organization is the basic organization for the CFV scout platoon (see Figure 2-11). This organization is a good compromise between the requirement of employing a maximum number of elements during the reconnaissance or security mission and the need for security. It is the ideal organization for the conduct of a route reconnaissance mission. In the screen mission, this organization allows occupation of three long-duration OPs and the simultaneous conduct of dismounted patrols. In this organization, the platoon leader and platoon sergeant are members of scout teams (C and B, respectively). As members of these teams, they have to perform both scout duties and the command and control requirements of their duty positions. To minimize their workload, these leaders must make maximum use of their gunners, and they should position themselves as the overwatch element within their teams.

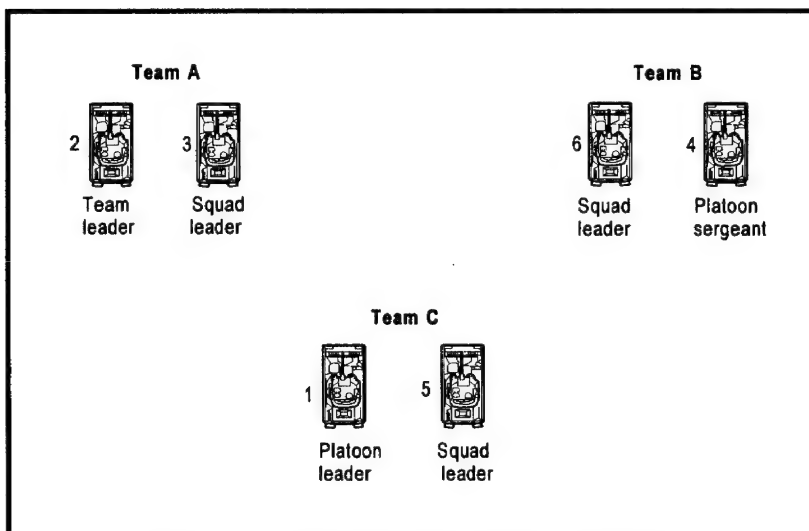


Figure 2-11. CFV scout platoon three-team organization.

Two-Team

The two-team organization is used when increased security is required, when the area of operations can be covered efficiently with only two elements, or when operational strength (less than six vehicles operational) makes the three-team organization impossible. The two teams are formed by splitting the C element of a three-team organization as illustrated in Figure 2-12.

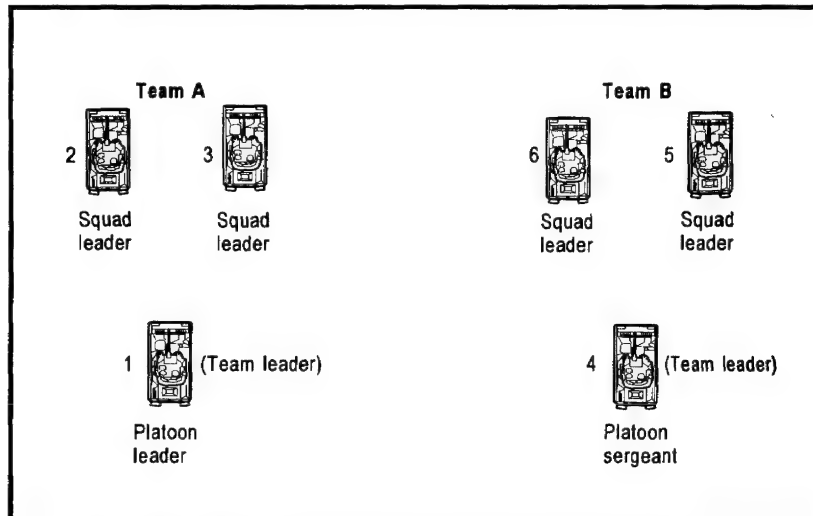


Figure 2-12. CFV scout platoon two-team organization.

Six-Vehicle

The six-vehicle organization is the most difficult to control (see Figure 2-13). The platoon leader employs this organization when he must have six separate information sources at the same time.

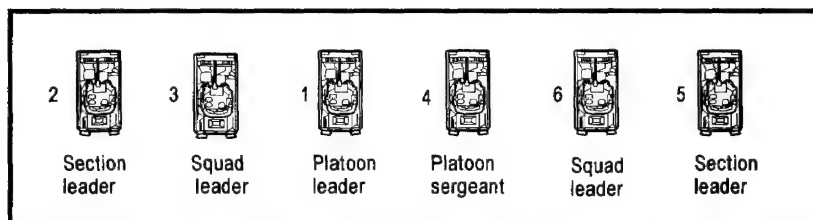


Figure 2-13. CFV scout platoon six-vehicle organization.

HMMWV SCOUT PLATOON

With 10 vehicles, the HMMWV scout platoon has a wide variety of organizational options. The platoon leader selects an organization based on his METT-T analysis. The basic maneuver element of this platoon, as in the cavalry scout platoon, is the scout team. The platoon also includes a headquarters element, which consists of both the platoon leader and the PSG or the platoon leader only. The headquarters element focuses on command and control of the platoon. It travels with the scout teams for security, but it positions itself as needed based on the METT-T analysis and command and control requirements of the mission. When both the platoon leader and PSG are in the headquarters element, the element will normally be split among the scout teams to disperse command and control capability throughout the platoon. The following are the basic organizations of the platoon. The platoon leader may combine organizations to match unique METT-T requirements and to accommodate attachments.

Two-Team Organization

This is an effective organization when only two maneuver corridors have to be observed or when two distinct reconnaissance missions are required. This organization maximizes security at the team level and gives the teams sufficient maneuver and command and control capability to conduct limited separate missions. This organization allows the platoon to put out two long-duration OPs; it is the best organization for dismounted operations. See Figure 2-14.)

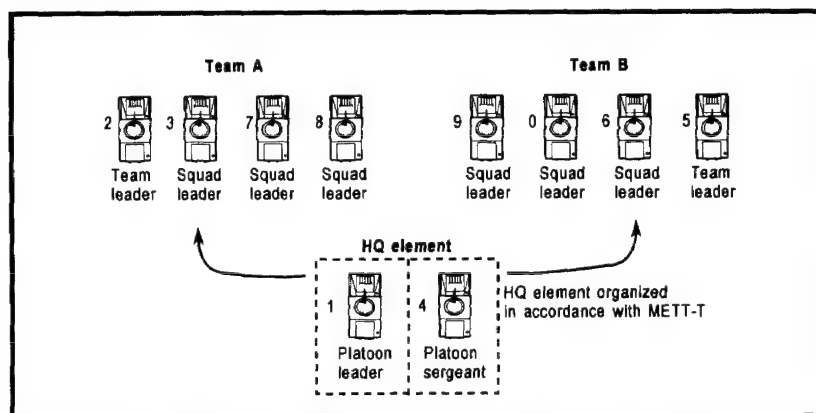


Figure 2-14. HMMWV scout platoon two-team organization.

Three-Team Organization

This organization is ideal for reconnaissance along a single route. Three long-duration OPs can be manned in this organization; however, the ability to concurrently conduct dismounted patrols is somewhat limited. (See Figure 2-15.)

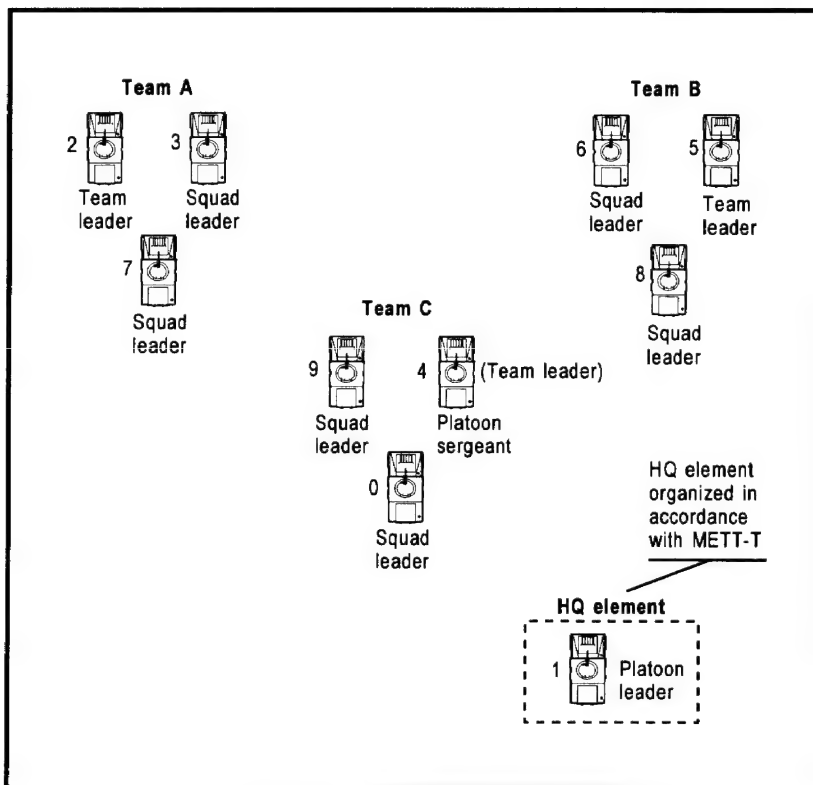


Figure 2-15. HMMWV scout platoon three-team organization.

Four-Team Organization

This organization is used in reconnoitering large areas or multiple maneuver corridors. Four short-duration OPs can be established, providing the capability to structure OPs in depth. In this organization, the team has dismounted capability to conduct local security only. (See Figure 2-16)

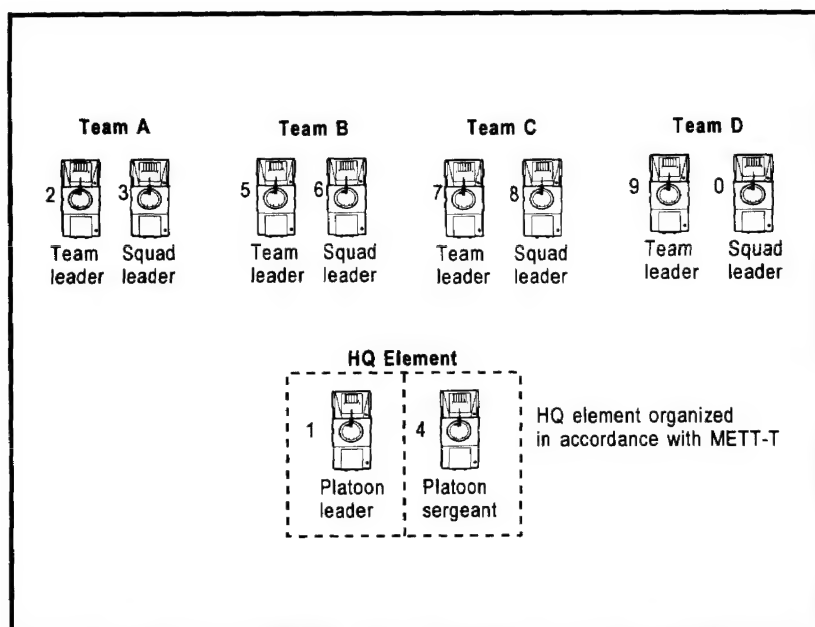


Figure 2-16. HMMWV scout platoon four-team organization.

Eight-Squad Organization

The eight-squad organization is rarely used because it creates very difficult command and control challenges. It gives the platoon an enhanced ability to conduct screening missions in depth, although only for short durations. It also provides the platoon with the ability to conduct numerous reconnaissance tasks simultaneously. In addition to command and control, this organization has two severe drawbacks: elements are extremely vulnerable to enemy contact due to lack of overwatch, and the platoon has virtually no ability to organize patrols of any type.

TASK ORGANIZATION

METT-T circumstances and attachments will often cause the platoon leader to employ variations of the basic platoon organizations discussed previously. For example, terrain or mission requirements may require that one scout team consist of four HMMWVs to enhance its dismounted capability while the rest of the platoon is organized into two-vehicle teams (see [Figure 2-17](#) page 2-36).

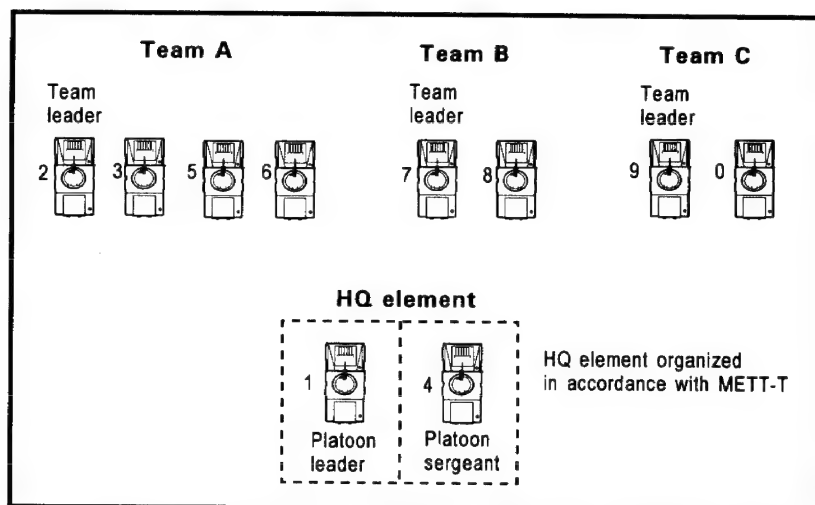


Figure 2-17. Example task organization with varying team sizes.

Attachments, such as infantry or engineers, may also change the composition and number of teams. A CFV scout platoon with these assets attached may task organize into four teams: two teams consisting of one CFV and one infantry or engineer squad each, and two teams of two CFVs each (see Figure 2-18). Later chapters contain further information regarding mission task organization.

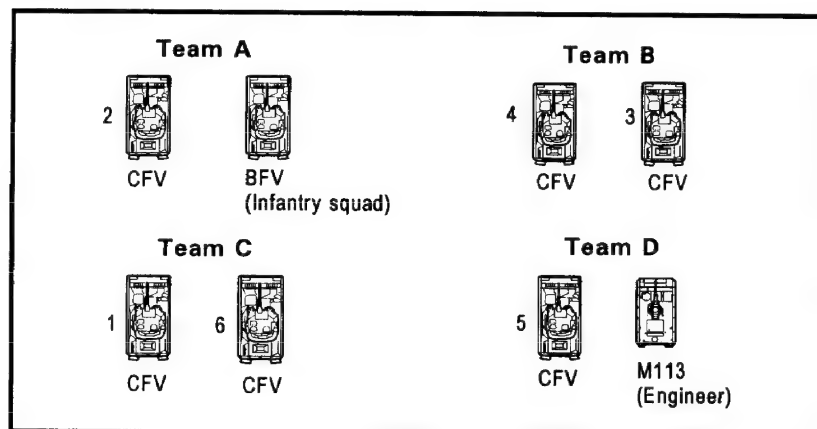


Figure 2-18. Example task organization with engineers and infantry.

Section VII. COMMUNICATIONS

Because of the extended frontages and distances over which the scout platoon operates, it must rely heavily on effective communication techniques. These techniques include not only the means of communication (wire, visual, radio), but also the proper way of using them, correct application of operational terms, and effective speech. The platoon leader must ensure all of his soldiers understand communications procedures and the different nets on which the platoon operates.

MEANS OF TACTICAL COMMUNICATION

The scout platoon always has several available means of communication. Whether it is using messenger, wire, visual, sound, or radio signals, the platoon must remain flexible enough to react quickly to new situations. Use of each of these means of communication must be carefully planned to avoid dependence on a single method.

SOPs help the platoon tremendously in its mission accomplishment. **Hand-**and-arm and flag signals aid in platoon movement. Clear and concise radio transmissions can reduce transmission times.

Messenger

This is the most secure means available to the scout platoon. Messenger service is generally very flexible and reliable. In an assembly area, it is the preferred means of communication. On an infrequent basis, the platoon maybe called on to act as messengers to the parent unit's higher headquarters.

Wire

This method of communication is especially effective in static positions or during the conduct of a screening mission. It is very versatile and can be used in many different situations. Using one of the many wire devices available, the scout platoon establishes hot loops to communicate within the platoon, with OPs, and with the parent unit command post (CP) in assembly areas.

Visual

Visual communications are used to transmit prearranged messages quickly over short distances. Since the scout platoon rarely operates over short distances, visual signals are not used across the platoon. Scout teams, however, may rely heavily on this type of communication. Signals must be clear enough to be understood by the vehicle commanders as they operate across the battlefield. In those cases when the entire platoon is together, such as in a coil, in an assembly area, or on a road march, all vehicle commanders must stay alert to pass on visual signals from the platoon leader to other vehicle commanders in the platoon.

Standard hand-and-arm or flag signals work well during periods of good visibility. Flashlights, chemical lights, or other types of lights are required during periods of limited visibility. The platoon must exercise extreme care when using lights to avoid alerting the enemy to friendly intentions.

Pyrotechnic ammunition can also be used for visual signaling. The meanings of these signals are identified in paragraph 5 of the OPORD and in the unit SOI. The main advantage of pyrotechnics is the speed with which signals can be transmitted. The main disadvantage is the enemy's ability to imitate them.

Sound

This form of communication is used mainly to attract attention, transmit prearranged messages, and spread alarms. Sound signals carry only short distances; in addition, range and clarity are greatly reduced by battle noise. Since they are open to enemy interception, use of sound signals maybe restricted for security reasons. They must be simple to prevent misunderstandings. Prearranged meanings for sound signals are in the unit SOP and SOI.

Radio

The radio is the platoon's most flexible, most frequently used, and least secure means of communication. The most effective way to use the radio is to follow standard radiotelephone procedures: brevity, proper use of authentication tables, and the use of approved operational terms. Radio signals can be traced by enemy direction-finding units. Once found, the transmitter can easily be destroyed. The scout platoon leader must strictly enforce radio discipline regardless of encryption devices; survival of the platoon depends on good habits.

RADIO NET ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Battalion Scout Platoon Nets

The following are the radio nets employed and/or monitored by leaders in the battalion scout platoon. (See Figure 2-19.)

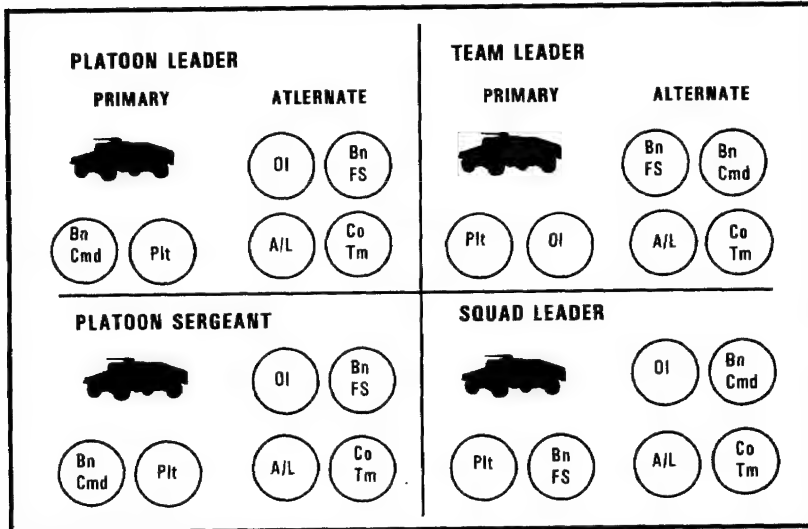


Figure 2-19. Battalion scout platoon nets.

Platoon. This net is used to conduct all platoon operations. All elements within the scout platoon must have the ability to monitor and transmit on this net at all times. Making sure this happens is one of the keys to effective command and control during the conduct of tactical operations.

Battalion command. The battalion command net is the primary net used to direct the tactical operations of the battalion. It is monitored continuously by all subordinate commanders in the battalion, as well as by key staff members and the TOC. As a key maneuver element of the battalion, the scout platoon must monitor this net continuously. The platoon leader and the PSG should both have the capability to monitor and transmit on this net when the battalion is conducting tactical operations.

Operations and intelligence. Many battalions operate this net to handle routine reports and thus make the command net more efficient. This net can also be used to control the R&S effort before the battalion main body begins tactical operations.

If the battalion has not begun tactical operations but the scouts are engaged in reconnaissance or surveillance operations, the scout platoon may use this as its primary net. In such a case, both the scout platoon leader and PSG should be able to monitor and receive on this net. Operating on the OI net should be a temporary situation. The scout platoon leader should always designate a scout to monitor the battalion command net to facilitate rapid transition to the command net once the battalion main body begins tactical operations.

Fires. Because rapidly coordinating for and adjusting indirect fires is vital in all R&S operations, the fires net is extremely critical to the success of scout platoon operations. The platoon should have all radios that are not on the higher command net or the platoon net preset to this net. All scouts, whether operating mounted or dismounted, and regardless of how many radios they have, must have the ability to quickly change to this net and coordinate indirect fire. The scout platoon leader must ensure that he coordinates with the battalion FSO regarding the use of this net to ensure it is capable of receiving voice call for fire messages.

Company team. All scouts must have the ability to rapidly change to any of the battalion company team nets. These nets are used to conduct coordination for handing off enemy targets once the scouts make contact.

Administrative/logistics. The scout PSG will usually monitor the A/L net for the platoon, but the platoon leader must be familiar with it as well. The PSG uses it as required to send routine A/L reports. This net is also used to coordinate logistics resupply operations and evacuation of casualties.

Retrans. When the scout platoon operates at extended distances from the battalion TOC, it may use the battalion retrans net to facilitate effective communications between the scout platoon leader and the TOC. The platoon leader should request use of the retrans net during all missions requiring extended ranges of FM communications.

Cavalry Scout Platoon Nets

The following are the radio nets employed and/or monitored by leaders in the cavalry scout platoon. (See Figure 2-20.)

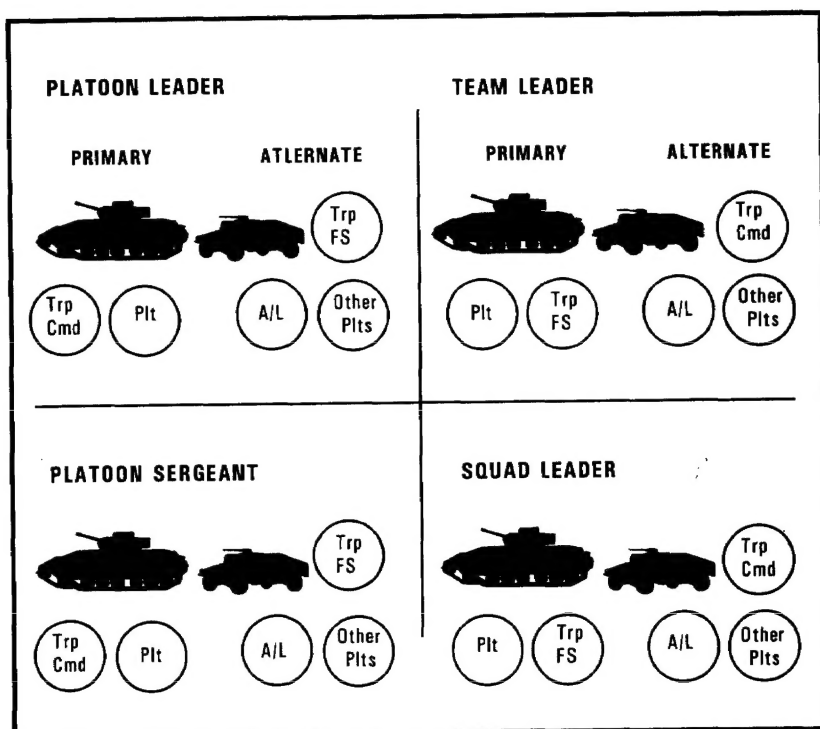


Figure 2-20. Cavalry scout platoon nets.

Platoon. This net is used to conduct all platoon operations. All elements within the scout platoon must have the ability to monitor and transmit on this net at all times. Making sure this happens is one of the keys to effective command and control during the conduct of tactical operations. All scouts must also have the ability to rapidly change to any other platoon net as required to coordinate contact points or handover of enemy targets.

Troop command. This net is used to maneuver the cavalry troop as well as to process all routine A/L reports. The troop TOC is the net control station (NCS), and the scout platoon leader or PSG sends all routine reports to the

troop XO. This net can be used by scout and tank platoon leaders to talk to each other and coordinate key tactical actions of their platoons; however, platoon leaders will use each other's platoon nets to pass routine messages not of interest to the commander. Both the scout platoon leader and PSG must always have the ability to monitor and transmit on this net. All scouts must be able to move to this net to send their reports and receive guidance if they are unable to contact their platoon leader or PSG.

Troop fires. Many troops operate a troop fires net. It is used to send calls for fire to the troop FSO or directly to the troop mortars. The platoon leader should direct all radios not actively operating on another net to enter this net. All scouts must have the ability to change to this net and coordinate indirect fire.

NET CONTROL

The scout platoon net is the key to command and control of the platoon. The smooth functioning of this net allows accurate information to be passed quickly to the platoon leader. This information flow is critical in maintaining the platoon leader's situational awareness and command and control. When contact is made, the volume of traffic on the scout platoon net will increase drastically. The platoon must be organized to control, understand, and process this vast amount of information while engaging the enemy and possibly being engaged in turn. The following methods can be used to ensure the information flowing over the net is organized and controlled to permit the platoon leader to both understand it and issue orders in response to it.

Flash Traffic

The platoon leader should, in either the platoon order or the unit SOP, establish criteria for flash traffic. An example of flash traffic criteria is PIR. When a scout observes evidence of the critical item, he interrupts any net traffic with a proword such as "FLASH-FLASH-FLASH." The use of such a proword immediately advises all other scouts to get off the net, thus clearing it for the critical traffic to be passed.

Net Discipline

The PSG is responsible for net discipline. In this capacity, he will challenge any violation of procedure as it occurs. Improper or inefficient radio procedures, even in routine administrative reports, inhibit effective command and control.

Effective Messages

The best way to ensure effectiveness of a radio message is to write it out before it is sent. This procedure yields greater accuracy and ultimately is more timely. It also ensures that the message is sent correctly, completely, and clearly in the shortest possible amount of time. The message is easier to understand, and the duration of the electronic signature of the sending station is minimized.

Radiotelephone Procedure

Proper RTP is the cornerstone of effective command and control in the scout platoon. All scouts must be expert in communications procedures. This not only ensures efficient communications within the platoon, but also allows all members of the platoon to communicate effectively with outside elements such as the battalion, squadron, troop, company, or other platoons.

TECHNIQUES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

The platoon leader and PSG are responsible for ensuring that their scouts understand and adhere to these techniques, which can contribute to more effective, more secure tactical communications.

Minimize Duration

All messages sent within or from the scout platoon must be short and informative. The longer the message, the greater the opportunity of enemy elements to electronically determine the scout's location. Message length can be controlled in several ways:

- Write the message down and then eliminate all unnecessary words from the written message before sending it.
- Read the message as written when sending it.
- Use a brevity code that reduces the need to explain the tactical picture in detail.
- Break long messages into several parts and send each separately.

Minimize Signature

When sending a message, every scout must be conscious of the size and nature of the electronic signature that he is emitting. He must consider the following methods for reducing the size of the signature:

- Use terrain to mask the signature from the direction of the enemy.
- Set the transmitter power to low if that provides sufficient range (as it often does within the platoon and team).
- Whenever possible (particularly in stationary operations), use an expedient directional antenna to restrict the enemy's ability to monitor the signal. See FM 17-98-1 for instructions on how to construct and use such an antenna.

Know the System

Each scout must be an expert at using and maintaining his FM communications system. In particular, he must understand its capabilities and limitations. He must also understand how to maintain the system and how to troubleshoot it whenever he suspects it is not functioning properly.